

# Tea with Lady McNess

*Lady McNess is reading. Her butler James is standing in the background waiting for her orders. A big clock beside him strikes five times. Lady McNess turns round and looks at James expectantly. He doesn't seem to notice. Lady McNess clears her throat. James still doesn't react.*

**Lady:** James !  
**Butler:** At your service, Lady McNess ?  
**Lady:** Er ... I think I'll have tea now, James.  
**Butler:** With pleasure, Lady McNess.

*Butler James goes into the kitchen, makes some tea and waits.*

**Lady:** James !  
**Butler:** Yes, Lady McNess ?  
**Lady:** Isn't the tea ready yet ?  
**Butler:** It is, Lady McNess.  
**Lady:** So, will you serve it, please.  
**Butler:** With pleasure, Lady McNess.

*Butler James goes into the kitchen, gets the tea, puts it on the table and waits.*

**Lady:** But James !  
**Butler:** Yes, Lady McNess ?  
**Lady:** The tea is getting cold. I wonder what you're waiting for. Will you please pour it ?  
**Butler:** With pleasure, Lady McNess.

*Butler James pours tea and waits.*

**Lady:** James ! You're really getting old. Am I supposed to have tea without sugar ? Please, get me some sugar !  
**Butler:** With pleasure, Lady McNess.

*Butler James gets sugar, puts it on the table and waits. Lady McNess turns round and stares at him.*

**Lady:** Well ?  
**Butler:** I beg your pardon, Lady McNess ?  
**Lady:** James. For how many years have you been in my service now ?  
**Butler:** For forty-five years, eight months and twenty-nine days, to be precise, Lady McNess.  
**Lady:** ( *she sighs* ) And, as it seems, still not long enough to know that something very important is missing !  
**Butler:** Yes, Lady McNess ?  
**Lady:** James ! You're so distracted this afternoon. The *whiskey* is missing, of course. After so many years you ought to know that a true Scottish lady never drinks tea without a splash of whiskey ... well - or at least I certainly never do. So, you may serve the whiskey, James.  
**Butler:** With pleasure, Lady McNess.

*Butler James gets a bottle of whiskey, puts it on the table and waits.*

**Lady:** James ! James !! What is the matter with you ? Do I have to tell you every single thing ? How do you think the whiskey is going to get into my cup of tea ?  
**Butler:** Well ...  
**Lady:** Well what ? ( *in a high voice* ) Will you please pour me some of that whiskey, stop waiting all the time and start doing something ?!  
**Butler:** With pleasure, Lady McNess.

*Butler James pours some whiskey into Lady McNess's teacup, sits down, takes the cup and downs it with satisfaction.*

**Lady:** But ... but ... James !!! What ... what are you doing ?!  
**Butler:** Drinking your tea, Lady McNess.  
**Lady:** But ... did I tell you to do so, James ?  
**Butler:** No, Lady McNess, you didn't. But you told me not to wait all the time, but to do something. So, I'm drinking your tea. Cheers, Lady McNess !